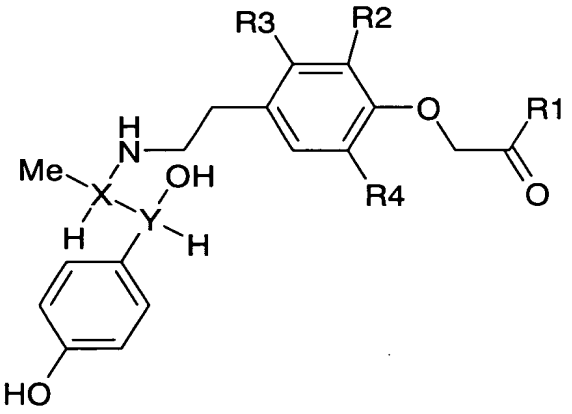
Claims

1. A method of treating overactive bladder which comprises administering to a mammal in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of f a compound of general formula I,

Formula I



wherein
X is a chiral carbon atom of R or S;
Y is a chiral carbon atom of R or S;

R1 is a hydroxy group, a C_1-C_6-alkoxy group, an aryl- C_1-C_6-alkoxy group, a primary amino group or a mono- or di (C_1-C_6-alkyl)amino group;

one of the groups R2 and R3 is a hydrogen atom, the other group is a hydrogen atom , a halogen atom, a C_1-C_6-alkyl group, a trifluoromethyl group or a C_1-C_6-alkoxy group; and

R4 is a halogen atom, a C_1-C_6-alkyl group, a halo(C_1-C_6-alkyl) group, a hydroxy group, a C_1-C_6-alkoxy group, an aryl- C_1-C_6-alkoxy group, a C_1-C_6-alkoxy group, a cyano group, a nitro group, an amino group, a mono- or di (C_1-C_6-alkyl)amino group,

a carbamoyl group, a mono- or di (C_1-C_6-alkyl)carbamoyl group or corresponds to the group –NHCOR5, where R5 is a hydrogen atom or a C_1-C_6-alkyl group;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A method according to claim 1, characterised in that the two stereocentres X and Y are of opposite configurations.

3. A method according to claim 2, characterised in that the stereocentre X on which the amino group is formed is of S configuration and the stereocentre Y on which the hydroxy group is formed is of R configuration.

4. A method according to claim 3, characterised in that
R1 is a hydroxy group, a C_1-C_3-alkoxy group or an aryl- C_1-C_3-alkoxy group;
one of the groups R2 and R3 is a hydrogen atom, the other group is a C_1-C_3-alkyl group; and
R4 is a C_1-C_3-alkyl group;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. A method according to claim 4, characterised in that
R1 is a hydroxy group, a methoxy group or an ethoxy group;
R2 is a hydrogen atom;
R3 is a methyl group; and
R4 is a methyl group;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

6. A method according to claim 5, characterised in that
R1 is a hydroxy group or an ethoxy group;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. A method according to claim 1, characterised in that the compound is a pharmaceutically acceptable salt with one of the acids selected from among hydrochloric acid, hydrogen bromide, sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, acetic acid,

citric acid, tartaric acid, malic acid, succinic acid, fumaric acid, p-toluenesulphonic acid, benzenesulphonic acid, methanesulphonic acid, lactic acid or ascorbic acid.

8. A method according to claim 1, characterised in that the compound is (-)-ethyl 2-[4-(2-{[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-1-methylethyl]amino}ethyl)-2,5-dimethylphenoxy]acetate, (-)-ethyl 2-[4-(2-{[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-1-methylethyl]amino}ethyl)-2,5-dimethylphenoxy]acetate hydrochloride or (-)-2-[4-(2-{[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-1-methylethyl]amino}ethyl)-2,5-dimethylphenoxy] acetic acid.

9. A method according to one of claims 1 to 8, characterised in administering as an oral preparation.

10. A method according to one of claims 1 to 8, characterised in administering as a suppository.

11. A method according to one of claims 1 to 8, characterised in administering as a transdermal plaster.

12. A method according to one of claims 1 to 8, for treating neurogenic bladder hyperactivity.

13. A method according to claim 9, for treating neurogenic bladder hyperactivity.

14. A method according to claim 10, for treating neurogenic bladder hyperactivity.

15. A method according to claim 11, for treating neurogenic bladder hyperactivity.

16. A method according to one of claims 1 to 8, for treating idiopathic bladder hyperactivity.

17. A method according to claim 9, for treating idiopathic bladder hyperactivity.

18. A method according to claim 10, for treating idiopathic bladder hyperactivity.

19. A method according to claim 11, for treating idiopathic bladder hyperactivity.